

## **YERXA ROAD UNDERPASS PROJECT SUMMARY**

### **ISSUE**

The Fitchburg commuter rail line runs through the North Cambridge community. The rail line services high speed commuter trains and cuts through the North Cambridge community, limiting access for pedestrians and cyclists.

### **COMMUNITY PROCESS**

Since 1993, the City of Cambridge and the North Cambridge neighborhood have been planning for safe and direct crossings of the Fitchburg rail line. The City allocated \$50,000 for a safety study and preliminary design which was completed in 1994. Final design of the Yerxa Road underpass is substantially complete and was funded through a \$500,000 state grant from the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.

### **SUMMARY OF PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS**

The Yerxa Road underpass will connect the dense residential areas of Walden Square and Richdale Avenue located on the south side of the tracks with the #83 MBTA bus on Rindge Avenue and numerous community facilities – the Fitzgerald Elementary School, Bergin Park and Playground, McMath Park, and the Gately Youth Center located on the north side of the tracks. The underpass design is fully ADA compliant and will safely and comfortably accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists. The underpass will include a new walkway with lighting, retaining walls, and handrails, plantings, a small seating area, and attractive steel picket fencing along both sides of the railroad right of way to prevent people from crossing the tracks.

Without the Yerxa Road underpass, the closest locations for pedestrians to cross the rail line are at Walden Street (1260' to the east) and Sherman Street (970' to the west). Both of these streets are high volume streets that are not inviting to pedestrians, especially younger school age children. Using the underpass, a child living at Walden Square going to school at the Fitzgerald Elementary School has a 1/5 of a mile commute on a quiet residential street. Without the underpass, this child has over ½ mile commute that includes walking along Sherman Street.

### **FUNDING**

The City allocated \$4,450,000 in the FY04 budget to fund construction of the Yerxa Road Underpass.